

REMARKS

Applicant and the undersigned thank Examiner Bates for her careful review of this application. Consideration of the present application in view of the following remarks and allowance of all claims are respectfully requested.

In the Restriction Requirement dated September 6, 2007, the Examiner alleged the claims were directed to more than one species of generic invention. Because of the alleged lack of unity, restriction to one of the following inventions was required under PCT Rule 13.1:

A. An apparatus having a sleeve with a flange and method, corresponding to Claims 1-8 and 23-25

B. An apparatus having spaced apart internal/ external threads at the tubular ends and method, corresponding to Claims 9, 12, 15, 18, 22, 26/9, 27/13, 28/15,

C. An apparatus having a stress concentrator at a pin of a tubular and method, corresponding to Claims 10, 13, 16, 19, 21, 26/10, 27/13, 28/16

D. An apparatus having spaced apart internal/external threads at the tubular ends and having a stress concentrator at a pin of a tubular and method, corresponding to Claims 11, 14, 17, 20, 26/11, 27/14, 28/17

Applicant hereby elect Species A for examination, corresponding to claims 1-8 and 23-25, without traverse. Applicants reserve the right to pursue the unelected inventions in separate divisional applications.

Claims 9-22 and 26-28 have been cancelled without prejudice or disclaimer. Applicants reserve the right to pursue the cancelled claims in a continuation or divisional application.

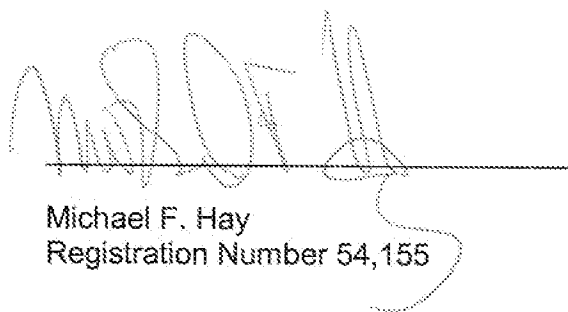
CONCLUSION

The foregoing is submitted as a full and complete Response to the Restriction Requirement mailed September 6, 2007. Applicant has made a diligent effort to advance the prosecution of the application. Allowance of claims 1 - 28 is respectfully requested.

As the one-month statutory period for reply expires on October 6, 2007, this Response is therefore considered timely filed and no fees are believed to be due. However, should the Commissioner deem any fees as being due, including any fees for any extensions of time, the Commissioner is hereby authorized to debit said fees from, or to credit any overpayments to, USPTO Deposit Account Number 50-3786, Reference No. 14147.105127.

The Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned via telephone at the number listed below if a telephone conference would expedite or aid the prosecution and examination of this application.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'Michael F. Hay', is written over a horizontal line. The signature is stylized and cursive.

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